USA TODAY Super 25 rankings

High school baseball

Final 2002 ranking (Coming soon: All-USA baseball team)

1. Elkins, Missouri City, Texas (35-1)
Previous: 1. **Highlights:** Won Class 5A state title; two players picked in major league draft. **Top hitter:** James Loney, 8 HRs, 58 RBI, .509. **Top pitcher:** Wardell Starling, 1.98 ERA, 12-0, 109 strikeouts (89 IP).

2. Bishop Amat, La Puente, Calif. (28-2)
Previous: 2. **Highlights:** Won second consecutive CIF-Southern Section, Division IV crown. **Top hitter:** Mike Lange, 33 RBI, 23 runs, .474. **Top pitcher:** Adam Simon, 1.36 ERA, 13-0.

3. Parkview, Lilburn, Ga. (33-4)
Previous: 3. **Highlights:** Won second consecutive Class 5A state title. **Top hitter:** Jeff Francouer, 16 HRs, 49 RBI, .487, 21 SB, 51 runs. **Top pitcher:** junior Tim Gustafson, 2.15 ERA, 12-2.

4. Madison, Vienna, Va. (29-0)
Previous: 6. **Highlights:** Won Class 3A state title; set state season mark for best record. **Top hitter:** Matt Foley, 3 HRs, 28 runs, 38 RBI, .543. **Top pitcher:** J.J. Hollenbeck, 0.76 ERA, 12-0.

5. Picayune, Miss. (35-3)
Previous: 4. **Highlights:** Won Class 4A state title; set school record for wins. **Top hitter:** Rhyne Hughes, 6 HRs, 57 RBI, .471. **Top pitcher:** junior LH Justin Pigott, 1.68 ERA, 13-0.

6. Creighton Prep, Omaha (32-5)
Previous: 5. **Highlights:** Won second consecutive Class 4A state title, school's seventh overall; outscored opponents 325-122. **Top hitter:** Eric Eymann, 4 HRs, 47 RBI, .483. **Top pitcher:** Brian Bull, 1.50 ERA, 7-0.

7. Rancho Buena Vista, Vista, Calif. (30-4)
Previous: 7. **Highlights:** Won its first CIF-San Diego Section, Division I crown; won Lions Club 4A tournament and Palomar League. **Top hitter:** Mitch Einertson, 12 HRs, 39 RBI, 49 runs, .444. **Top pitcher:** Jesse English, 1.22 ERA, 13-1.

8. Hialeah, Fla. (24-10)
Previous: 8. **Highlights:** Won second consecutive Class 6A state title; LHP Camilo Vazquez was drafted by Cincinnati. **Top hitter:** Jorge Mico, 3 HRs, 46 RBI, .518. **Top pitcher:** Vazquez, 1.13 ERA, 11-0.

9. Southridge, Miami (32-2)
Previous: 9. **Highlights:** Runner-up in Class 6A state tournament; won two in-season tournament titles. **Top hitter:** Robert Andino, 4 HRs, 32 RBI, .355. **Top pitcher:** Edgar Ramirez, 15-0, 0.32 ERA, 94 strikeouts (87 IP).

10. Centennial, Bakersfield, Calif. (25-4)
Previous: 10. **Highlights:** Won CIF-Central Section Valley and SWYL championships; set state season record for doubles (98). **Top hitter:** Zach Aakhus 5 HRs, 38 RBI, 49 runs, .481. **Top pitcher:** Garrett White, 2.90 ERA, 11-2.

11. Dunedin, Fla. (32-1)
Previous: 11. **Highlights:** Won Class 4A Region III and District 11 titles; won first 32 games. **Top hitter:** Brian Dopirak, 11 HRs, 51 RBI, 49 runs, .490. **Top pitcher:** Jamie Garris, 0.88 ERA, 10-0.

12. Canyon del Oro, Tucson (27-6)
Previous: 12. **Highlights:** Won second Class 5A title in three years and sixth overall. **Top hitter:** junior Tyson Moll, 5 HRs, 29 RBI, .452. **Top pitcher:** Seth Lackow, 1.76 ERA, 9-3.

13. Camarillo, Calif. (30-4)
Previous: 13. **Highlights:** Won its first CIF-Southern Section, Division I championship; won its fifth consecutive Pacific View League title. **Top hitter:** Delmon Young, 17 HRs, 56 RBI, 55 runs, .542. **Top pitcher:** Travis Sutton, 1.59 ERA, 14-0.

14. Jesuit, New Orleans (30-6)
Previous: 14. **Highlights:** Won its first Class 5A state title in 17 years. **Top hitter:** Steven Broschofski, 13 HRs, 51 RBI, .409. **Top pitcher:** Ryan Martin, 2.52 ERA, 10-3.

15. St. Ignatius, Cleveland (27-3)
Previous: 15. **Highlights:** Won its first Division I state title; won last 18 games. **Top hitter:** Neall French, 6 HRs, 32 RBI, .453. **Top pitcher:** junior LH Greg Moviel, 1.56 ERA, 10-0, 105 strikeouts (63 IP).

16. Wilcox, Santa Clara, Calif. (34-3)
Previous: 16. **Highlights:** Won its second CIF-Central Coast Section, Division I championship; won eighth consecutive league division crown and one in-season tournament. **Top hitter:** Daniel Romero, 8 HRs, 45 RBI, 54 runs, .456. **Top pitcher:** Matthew Winck 1.15 ERA, 14-0, 93 strikeouts (93 IP).

17. Bishop Kenny, Jacksonville (28-4)
Previous: 17. **Highlights:** Won its first Class 4A state title. **Top hitter:** A.J. Johnson, 8 HRs, 32 RBI, .409. **Top pitcher:** Jeremy Papelbon, 1.43 ERA, 14-0.

18. Covington (Ky.) Catholic (40-3)
Previous: Not ranked. **Highlights:** Won its first state title; coach Bill Krumpelbeck, 563-270-2, completed his 26th season. **Top hitter:** Tim Grogan, 10 HRs, 53 RBI, .444. **Top pitcher:** Rob Harmon, 0.76 ERA, 13-0, 144 strikeouts (80 IP).

19. Eastlake, Chula Vista, Calif. (28-6)
Previous: 19. **Highlights:** Won its second CIF-San Diego Section, Division II title and Metro League tournament crown; team batted .367, including 12 players better than .300. **Top hitter:** junior Eddie Solis, 13 HRs, 35 RBI, 40 runs, .438. **Top pitcher:** Jack Spradlin, 1.79 ERA, 8-3.

20. Fort Mill, S.C. (29-5)
Previous: 20. **Highlights:** Won Class 4A state title, its first in 40 years; beat nationally ranked Southside (Miami) 2-0. **Top hitter:** Shane Dove, 8 HRs, 39 RBI, .423. **Top pitcher:** Dove, 0.98 ERA, 13-0, 127 strikeouts (86 IP).

21. Gainesville, Ga. (33-3)
Previous: Not ranked. **Highlights:** Won second consecutive Class 4A state title and seventh overall; closed season on 25-game winning streak. **Top hitter:** Micah Owings, 25 HRs (Georgia state record), 66 RBI, .448. **Top pitcher:** John Carroll, 1.21 ERA, 13-0.

22. Daphne, Ala. (30-10)
Previous: 22. **Highlights:** Won its second consecutive Class 6A state title. **Top hitter:** Jeff Butts, 5 HRs, 26 RBI, .395. **Top pitcher:** junior Brett Turner, 2.35 ERA, 11-3.

23. DeMatha, Hyattsville, Md. (25-5)
Previous: 23. **Highlights:** Won its 12th WCAC title since 1984; closed season winning 17 in row. **Top hitter:** Matt Capese, 22 RBI, 32 runs, 16 SB, .436. **Top pitcher:** Mike King, 1.10 ERA, 5-0.

24. Rancho Bernardo, San Diego (29-7)
Previous: 24. **Highlights:** Runner-up in CIF-San Diego Section, Division I tournament. **Top hitter:** Scott Robinson, 14 HRs, 49 RBI, 36 runs, .434. **Top pitcher:** Hamels, 0.39 ERA, 10-0, 130 strikeouts (71 IP).

25. Portage (Mich.) Central (35-2)
Previous: Not ranked. **Highlights:** Won its first Division 1 state title. **Top hitter:** Scott Parse, 7 HRs, 58 RBI, 40 runs, .506. **Top pitcher:** Scott Miller, 2.10 ERA, 11-0.
Dropped out: No. 18 Ramapo (Franklin Lakes, N.J.) lost to Toms River South 2-1 in Group 3 state final; No. 21 Minnetonka (Minn.) lost to North (St. Paul) 7-3 in Class 3A state playoffs; and No. 25 Mount Lebanon (Pittsburgh) lost to State College 9-4 in Class 3A state playoffs.

By Christopher Lawlor

Regional rankings

East
1. DeMatha, Hyattsville, Md. (25-5)
2. Moon, Coraopolis, Pa. (20-6)
3. Archbishop Molloy, Briarwood, N.Y. (21-5)
4. Fairfield, Conn. (22-2)
5. Monroe, Bronx, N.Y. (38-4)
6. Delbarton, Morristown, N.J. (25-6)
7. Mount Lebanon, Pittsburgh (22-2)
8. Union, N.J. (26-3)
9. Clarkstown North, New City, N.Y. (27-5)
10. Archbishop Carroll, Radnor, Pa. (20-7)

South
1. Elkins, Missouri City, Texas (35-1)
2. Parkview, Lilburn, Ga. (33-4)
3. Madison, Vienna, Va. (29-0)
4. Picayune, Miss. (35-3)
5. Hialeah, Fla. (24-10)
6. Southridge, Miami (32-2)
7. Dunedin, Fla. (32-1)
8. Jesuit, New Orleans (30-6)
9. Bishop Kenny, Jacksonville (28-4)
10. Fort Mill, S.C. (29-5)

Midwest
1. Creighton Prep, Omaha (32-5)
2. St. Ignatius, Cleveland (27-3)
3. Covington (Ky.) Catholic (40-3)
4. Portage (Mich.) Central (35-2)
5. Tallmadge, Ohio (26-5)
6. Platte County, Platte City, Mo. (24-3)
7. New Ulm, Minn. (27-3)
8. Sandburg, Orland Park, Ill. (27-9)
9. Westosha, Wis. (21-6)
10. Blissfield, Mich. (40-4)

West
1. Bishop Amat, La Puente, Calif. (28-2)
2. Rancho Buena Vista, Vista, Calif. (30-4)
3. Centennial, Bakersfield, Calif. (25-4)
4. Canyon del Oro, Tucson (27-6)
5. Camarillo, Calif. (30-4)
6. Wilcox, Santa Clara, Calif. (34-3)
7. Eastlake, Chula Vista, Calif. (28-6)
8. Rancho Bernardo, San Diego (29-7)
9. Wooster, Reno (30-9)
10. Woodinville, Wash. (24-2)

Elkins is USA's No. 1 in baseball

Texas team stays focused, goes 35-1

By Cristina Silva
USA TODAY

Persistence paid off for the Elkins (Missouri City, Texas) baseball team.

Elkins finished 2002 as USA TODAY'S top-ranked high school team after the promise of the two previous seasons ended with disappointing state tournament losses.

Notes An 11-4 victory vs. Bowie for the Class 5A state title made Elkins 35-1, the only blemish a loss to Houston Lamar.

"This team was focused on winning," coach Rick Carpenter says. "To go three times in a row is pretty rough to do in this state. The disappointments left a bad taste.

"It made this particular team's personality pretty unique. From the first day of practice, they talked about the title."

Carpenter says the team's success has been built on the strength of Missouri City's Little League and Pony League systems.

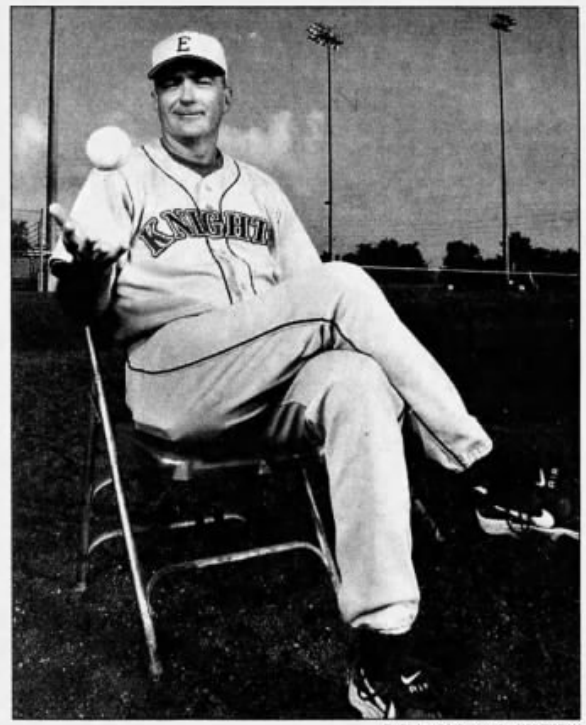
Elkins set school records for team batting average (.387) and fewest errors (28). Its pitchers struck out 293 in 216 innings.

The top pitchers were Wardell Starling and James Loney, both of whom made the all-state team.

Loney was the 19th player picked in the major league baseball draft as a first baseman by the Los Angeles Dodgers. He went 12-1, hit .509 and led the team in hits, RBI and homers.

Starling, a fourth-round pick by the Pittsburgh Pirates, was 12-0 and took a no-hitter into the fifth inning in the final against Bowie.

"I wish I could do it again," says Starling, the tournament MVP. "You can't ask to play with a better group of guys and (coaches)."



By Richard J. Carson for USA TODAY

Staying power: Elkins coach Rick Carpenter says his players didn't give up after disappointing losses in the last two state tournaments.

USA TODAY

Junior championships: U.S. high school pole vault leader Tommy Skipper is looking forward to a shorter trip from his home in Sandy, Ore., this weekend after being frustrated trying to get to Raleigh, N.C., for the Adidas Outdoor Championships last Friday.

He got as far as the Salt Lake City airport before a problem transporting his equipment stopped him.

Skipper, who set a high school junior class record of 17 feet, 7½ inches this year, will head south to northern California for the USA Junior National Championships (ages 14-19) at Stanford University.

The pole vault is Friday morning. At stake: a spot in the World Junior Championships in Kingston, Jamaica, on July 16-21.

National high school record breakers from the Adidas meet also are headed to Palo Alto.

Chris Lukezic, who anchored his Auburn, Wash., 4x800-meter relay team to a national record 7 minutes, 32.89 seconds at Raleigh, is entered in the 1,500 at Stanford. Lukezic ran a 1:49.4 relay leg.

Hoop action: Nine schools in USA TODAY's Super 25 boys basketball final rankings will participate in the And 1 National Classic that tips off Saturday at three sites.

The inaugural national tournament has eight regional sites. The eight regional winners play for the national title at The Palestra in Philadelphia on July 12-14.

Among the programs participating: Rice of New York City, St. John Neumann of Philadelphia, Rainier Beach of Seattle, Vashon of St. Louis, Miami Christian and DeMatha of Hyattsville, Md.

Briefly: The football, boys basketball and baseball teams from DeMatha of Hyattsville, Md., finished in the final top 25s this school year. DeMatha was No. 21 in football, No. 8 in basketball and No. 23 in baseball. ... Kelly Hammond of Bowie, Md., and Phillip Long of Wilson, N.C., were named MVPs as they led their East teams to wins in the All-American soccer games in Charleston, S.C.

Contributing: Fred Baer, Christopher Lawlor